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ABSTRACT

Three main questions are considered: (1) what concerns and worries do students feel? (2) to what extent do they think their personal problems warrant professional assistance? and (3) where would they turn for help if it were available? The Mooney Problem Check List, 1950 revision, form C, was used with 1114 Purdue undergraduate, single, full-time students. The data was analyzed to determine the significance of the following variables; (1) sex; (2) class level; (3) type of housing; and (4) academic performance. A five-part questionnaire, developed partly from the above data, was designed to measure student utilization and awareness of available sources of help and to determine why students did not use existing Purdue counseling services. Conclusions were discussed and implications for further research are suggested. (TL)

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An Analysis of Student Academic and Personal Concerns and Awareness of Counseling Services[1]

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During the current decade much concern has been expressed about the problems of students in American colleges and universities. The range of personal problems and concerns experienced by college students is great; however, authorities indicate that certain problems seem to appear more frequently in the college population than in other segments of society or at other points in the life cycle (King 1964).

Although there is reliable research concerning the magnitude of emotional disturbances in college students, additional investigations are needed. There are the many opinions of administrators, counselors, and psychiatrists who work continually with students. In addition to these opinions, studies have been conducted which point out the existence and nature of emotional and other personal problems. Yet, more systematic and organized

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[1]This study is based on the doctoral thesis of the junior author done under the the supervision of the senior author.

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data are needed on the types of problems experienced as evidenced through the student's viewpoint and on what opportunities the student sees for obtaining help with various personal problems and concerns (King 1964). Such information obtained from the student population at Purdue University was felt to be relevant in determining whether additional, more effective programs of help should be developed for present and future students. More specifically the purpose of this investigation was to seek information that would contribute toward answering the following questions: among the general undergraduate student population at Purdue University what are the concerns and worries that students feel, to what extent do they think they have experienced personal problems serious enough to warrant professional assistance, and where would they turn for help if it was available? Such information would allow the determination of any significant difference between the types of problems experienced by students according to sex, classification, and living quarters. Additionally, one could determine which sources of help students would consider pursuing for specific types of concerns and problems. For example, how frequently do students worry about interpersonal relationships as compared with career plans; or are both worries frequent; or does either seem of sufficient intensity to require professional help? Other

objectives of the study were as follows:

1. Determination of student awareness of opportunities for help on the campus.
2. Determination of student use of currently available services.
3. Determination of reasons why students do not utilize existing counseling services.

The usefulness of the investigation was assumed to be in discovering student needs for and awareness of counseling services at Purdue University. The accumulation of an extensive body of knowledge in this area would be of great potential significance in helping college counseling services to deal more effectively with the wide scope of students' personal problems.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Basic questions arose prior to the investigation. The population to which these research questions were subjected was defined as all single, full-time undergraduate Purdue students at the Lafayette campus. The investigation was conducted in two parts. Part I attempted to shed light on the following questions:

1. What is the magnitude of personal problems experienced by the sampled population?

2. What are the predominate problems of the total sampled population?
3. What are the predominate problems of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors?
4. Do the problems of males differ from those of females?
5. Are there significant differences between the problems of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors?
6. Are there significant differences between the problems of students living in residence halls, organized housing, and private housing?
7. What is the relationship between various types of student problems and academic performance?

Part II of the investigation sought information that would contribute toward answering the following questions:

8. Which sources of help at Purdue University would students consider pursuing for specific types of problems?
9. With what types of problems do students feel the various sources of help deal?
10. What is the level of student awareness of opportunities for help with personal problems on the campus?
11. How intense do students feel their personal problems are?

12. What proportion of students have used the available counseling services?
13. For what reasons do students not utilize available sources of help on the campus?

METHODOLOGY

Part I

Part I of the study consisted of mailing the Mooney Problem Check List, 1950 revision, Form C to a random sample of 2000 Purdue undergraduate full-time, single students at the Lafayette campus. The Mooney Problem Check List consists of eleven general problem areas with thirty problems listed in each area. The student was to check each problem applicable to him. The eleven areas on the check list to be designated as scales are as follows:

Health and Physical Development (HPD)
Finances, Living Conditions, and Employment (FLE)
Social and Recreational Activities (SRA)
Social-Psychological Relations (SPR)
Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR)
Courtship, Sex, and Marriage (CSM)
Home and Family (HF)
Morals and Religion (MR)
Adjustment to College Work (ACW)
The Future: Vocational and Educational (FVE)
Curriculum and Teaching Procedure (CTP)

The 1114 returned questionnaires were scored and frequency counts were made for each problem checked. Mean scores were computed for each scale in a manner depending upon the analysis being made. A one-factor analysis of variance on repeated measures was computed to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the average number of problems checked on each scale. Individual comparisons between means were made for males and females separately. Additionally, freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors were analyzed in the same fashion with a control on sex being maintained.

In order to determine if the scales differed according to sex and classification a two-factor analysis of variance (least-squares solution) was computed for each scale. The classification factor was considered to be freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Thus, a 2 x 4 factorial design was set up. The same two-factor analysis was made on each scale for type of housing and class level. Type of housing consisted of fraternities and sororities, residence halls, and private housing. Males and females were analyzed separately. Class level consisted of underclassmen (freshmen, sophomores) and upperclassmen (juniors, seniors). Thus, a 3 x 2 factorial design was set up.

In order to determine the relationship between student problems and academic performance, each respondent's total score on each scale was correlated by means of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient with his accumulative grade index.

Part II

In Part II of the study a questionnaire developed partially from information obtained in Part I was mailed to a different sample of 2000 students. Of the 1979 questionnaires reaching their destination 991 were returned.

The instrument was composed of five parts. The first part was designed to determine which sources of help students would seek for specific problems. This section was intended to give an indication of the kinds of problems for which students perceived the various counseling services as sources of help. Twenty-five problems frequently marked on the Mooney Problem Check List used in Part I were selected. The problems were chosen so as to represent the eleven scales on the check list, thus providing a representative selection of student problems. For each problem the respondent was to indicate which source of help he would seek from the following available services:

Academic Adviser

Office of the Dean of Men

Office of the Dean of Women

Residence Hall Counselor

Student Health Center, Psychiatric Service

Psychological Services Center

Financial Aids Office

Minister

Other

The purpose of the second part was to determine student awareness of available sources of help with personal problems. For each of the sources, as previously listed, the student was to indicate if he was familiar with the service.

The third section was included to discover how intense students felt their problems had been. Each respondent was to indicate if he had experienced problems intense enough to warrant the thought of seeking professional assistance.

The fourth part was intended to discover the magnitude of student use of available counseling services. The respondents were to indicate if they had or had not used each of the counseling services previously mentioned.

The final section was an attempt to discover why students did not use counseling services available at

Purdue. The student was to indicate from a list of reasons why he had not used or had discontinued use of the counseling services.

The responses to the questionnaire were grouped according to sex, class level, and type of housing. Chi square was used to test for the significance of the differences of responses to the various categories within the items in each section.

RESULTS

Part I

The average number of problems checked by males and females was 45 and 54, respectively. This suggests that the prevalence of personal problems experienced by females is greater than that of males. This fact is illustrated statistically when the problems are grouped by scale and tested for sex differences.

The average number of problems marked on each of the eleven scales by males and females according to classification are presented in Table 1. All of the F ratios computed for the one-factor analyses of variance for repeated measures were significant at the one per cent level. Thus, individual comparisons among the scale means were made by the Newman Keuls method. The greatest number of problems checked by males was in the areas of

TABLE 1

Mean Scores on the Mooney Problem Check List
According to Sex and Classification

	Sex		Males				Females			
Scales	Males	Females	Fr	So	Jr	Sr	Fr	So	Jr	Sr
HPD	3.38	4.35	3.62	3.39	3.07	3.30	4.83	4.49	4.49	3.15
FLE	3.59	4.16	3.48	4.08	3.28	3.48	4.47	4.63	4.07	2.99
SRA	5.70	6.96	6.19	5.87	5.61	4.67	7.53	7.18	7.43	5.16
SPR	3.59	5.16	3.93	4.20	3.14	2.65	5.48	5.63	5.59	3.49
PPR	4.09	5.44	4.64	4.53	3.47	3.17	5.80	5.97	5.93	3.54
CSM	4.02	4.48	4.35	4.17	4.04	3.21	4.60	4.64	4.82	3.69
HF	2.35	3.40	2.67	2.46	2.19	1.81	3.70	3.62	3.32	2.63
MR	3.41	4.28	3.61	3.74	3.01	3.07	4.44	4.39	4.69	3.44
ACW	6.22	6.62	7.46	6.67	5.24	4.47	6.85	7.87	6.64	4.36
FVE	4.16	4.45	4.52	4.19	4.12	3.52	4.36	4.72	4.42	4.21
CTP	4.43	4.87	4.67	4.64	4.10	4.10	4.55	5.34	5.44	4.18
Sample Size	695	419	233	181	155	126	139	119	81	80

adjustment to college work and social and recreational activities. However, males scored significantly higher on the ACW scale than on the SRA scale. The CTP, FVE, and PPR scales were the next most frequently marked areas; however, these scales did not differ significantly from each other. The fewest number of problems checked was on the HF scale. Scores on the HPD, MR, FLE, and SPR scales did not differ significantly. Females, on the average, marked more problems in the areas of social and recreational activities and adjustment to college work than in the other nine areas. However, these two areas did not differ significantly. The next three most frequently marked scales were PPR, SPR, and CTP. The fewest number of problems for females occurred in the area of home and family. There was no discernible difference between means on the FLE, MR, HPD, FVE, and CSM scales.

When males were analyzed by classification, the relative importance of personal problems in certain areas did not change much. Juniors' and seniors' scores in the areas of adjustment to college work and social and recreational activities did not differ significantly. However, freshmen and sophomores indicated more problems in the area of adjustment to college work than in the area of social and recreational activities. When females

were analyzed by classification, several conclusions could be drawn. Like males, the greatest number of problems occurred in the areas of adjustment to college work and social and recreational activities. However, there was not a significant difference between the average number of responses in these two areas for any classification of females. Additionally, the relative importance of the personal-psychological and social-psychological relations areas was inferred to be greater for females than for males.

The mean scores used in interpreting the sex and classification main effects for the two-factor analysis of variance are presented in Table 2. The analysis of variance summary is represented in Table 3. Evidence was found warranting the general conclusion that the problems of the sample students differed according to sex and classification. Females indicated significantly more problems than males in the areas of health and physcal development; finances, living conditions, and employment; social and recreational activities; social-psychological relations; personal-psychological relations; courtship, sex, and marriage; home and family; and morals and religion. Males and females did not differ significantly on the average number of problems checked in the areas of adjustment to college work, the

TABLE 2

Mean Scores on the Mooney Problem Check List
Used for Interpreting Main Effects

	Sex		Classification			
Scales	Male	Female	Fr	So	Jr	Sr
HPD	3.38	4.35	4.08	3.80	3.61	3.24
FLE	3.60	4.16	3.85	4.28	3.58	3.29
SRA	5.70	6.98	6.69	6.36	6.29	4.86
SPR	3.60	5.18	4.51	4.74	4.06	2.97
PPR	4.09	5.46	5.08	5.07	4.39	3.31
CSM	4.02	4.49	4.44	4.35	4.34	3.39
HF	2.35	3.40	3.05	2.90	2.62	2.12
MR	3.42	4.30	3.92	3.99	3.64	3.21
ACW	6.23	6.62	7.23	7.12	5.77	4.43
FVE	4.16	4.44	4.46	4.39	4.23	3.78
CTP	4.44	4.88	4.63	4.90	4.60	4.13
Sample Size	695	419	372	300	236	206

Note: The sex and classification means computed were the least-squares estimates of the mean levels for the main effects. Table 1 presents the mean scores at each level for the simple effects.

TABLE 3

F Ratios for the Analysis of Variance on the Mooney Problem Check List Scales (Sex x Classification)

Scales	(S) Sex	(C) Classification	S x C
HPD	30.61**	4.06**	3.25*
FLE	6.37*	3.52*	1.90
SRA	19.25**	7.09*	.71
SPR	33.07**	7.51**	1.17
PPR	25.37**	8.81**	2.04
CSM	4.63*	4.60**	.26
HF	29.16**	4.35**	.13
MR	15.27**	2.32	1.29
ACW	1.69	18.22**	2.80*
FVE	1.38	1.46	.63
CTP	3.15	1.47	1.69

*p<.05
**p<.01

future: vocational and educational, and curriculum and teaching procedure. There was no significant difference between the average number of problems marked by freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors on the MR, FVE, and CTP scales. Seniors marked significantly fewer problems than freshmen, sophomores, and juniors on the SRA, SPR, PPR, and CSM scales. Senior females had fewer problems on the HPD scale than did freshmen, sophomores, and juniors; however, males did not differ significantly by classification on this scale. Seniors indicated fewer problems than sophomores on the FLE scale. On the HF scale seniors marked fewer problems than freshmen and sophomores but not juniors. The effects of classification differed on the ACW scale for males and females. Junior and senior males had fewer problems on this scale than freshman and sophomore males. Senior females indicated fewer problems than freshmen, sophomores, and juniors.

When student problems were analyzed by type of housing, it was concluded that, except for females on the FLE scale, the average number of problems did not differ significantly by housing for males or females. Females living in private housing marked significantly more problems on the FLE scale than females living in residence halls or organized housing (sororities and cooperatives). Females living in organized housing

marked the fewest number of problems in this area. Thus, all three types of housing differed significantly from one another.

There was no significant correlation between the HPD, SRA, SPR, PPR, CSM, HF, MR, FVE, and CTP scales and accumulative grade index. The statistical tests were made at the one and five per cent levels. There was a very mildly significant Pearson r of -.202 ($p<.05$) for females on the FLE scale. When females were analyzed by class level, a significant Pearson r of -.209 ($p<.05$) was discovered for underclasswomen, but no significant correlation was found for upperclasswomen. In the area of adjustment to college work there were significant correlation coefficients of -.325 ($p<.01$) for males and -.322 ($p<.01$) for females. When males were analyzed by class level, underclassmen indicated a correlation coefficient of -.333 ($p<.01$) and upperclassmen demonstrated a correlation coefficient of -.205 ($p<.05$). Underclasswomen had a correlation coefficient of -.343 ($p<.01$) and upperclasswomen had a Pearson r of -.225 ($p<.05$).

In general it was concluded that there was no statistically significant correlation between scales on the Mooney Problem Check List and accumulative grade index except for females on the FLE scale and males and females on the ACW scale. These correlations, although significant, were low.

Part II

The investigation in Part II of the study discovered that parents, friends, and sources of help not directly labeled as Purdue were the most-often selected sources of help with personal problems when students were asked to indicate which service they would utilize for help with particular problems. However, when certain specific problems were considered, students perceived some Purdue services as prime sources of help. This was particularly true for problems not of a highly personal nature. The general conclusion that students were not aware of the wide range of problems handled by several of the Purdue services was drawn. The academic advisor was frequently perceived as a source of help for mainly academic concerns.

The level of student awareness of opportunities for help with personal problems on the campus depended on the class level, type of housing, and sex of the students. This was especially true for the level of awareness of the psychiatric service and the Psychological Services Center. The majority of underclass students for each sex and type of housing were not familiar with the Psychological Services Center. Approximately one-half of the upperclasswomen were unfamiliar with the Psychological Services Center. The majority of underclassmen were not familiar with the psychiatric service.

The majority of upperclasswomen were familiar with the psychiatric service. In general, the majority of students indicated that they were familiar with the other services.

The percentage of students who indicated that they had experienced personal problems intense enough to warrant the thought of seeking professional assistance varied from approximately thirty to fifty per cent. The percentage was dependent on the type of housing, sex, and class level of the students.

Students indicated that the academic advisor and residence hall counselor have been used most as sources of help with problems. However, the Financial Aids Office and the Offices of the Dean of Men and Women have been used by a sizeable percentage of students. The psychiatric service and the Psychological Services Center have been used least.

When students were asked why they have never used or have discontinued use of the available counseling services, they felt that they could or should be able to handle their own problems, or they were unaware of available services. This was particularly true for the psychiatric service, the Psychological Services Center, and the Offices of the Dean of Men and Women. Additionally, not knowing how to initiate a contact with the services was frequently indicated.

IMPLICATIONS

Since the most predominate problems of students are in the areas of adjustment to college work and social and recreational activities, it would appear that the academic adviser or counselor should play an important role in helping students to cope with their problems. Additionally, for people living in residence halls the residence hall counselor conceivably would be an important source of help in these perplexing areas. Thus, it is recommended that attention be focused on the qualifications, selection, role, function, and in-service procedures concerning both hall counselors and academic advisers. This study indicated that students perceive these services as sources of help with problems beyond present role definitions. Information can be obtained on the degree to which students perceive these sources of help as fulfilling an expected role and rendering expected services. The level of student satisfaction with the amount and nature of these services also should be determined.

Certain questions arose from this study concerning some of the services considered. Do these services wish to be made more available to students? Could they make additional service available? If these services wish to expand the scope of their coverage, information programs

and referral procedures must be developed to a greater extent. Perhaps a closer liaison with hall counselors and academic advisers would facilitate the initiation of contacts.

Certainly, additional study on the problems of students is warranted. Although the Mooney Problem Check List used in the current investigation contained a rather comprehensive list of student problems, it was deficient in such areas as the use of drugs and alcohol. Additional current problem areas could be included in another survey.

The present investigation did not determine specifically why students do not use available counseling services. Further study in this area might provide valuable assistance in improving the services provided.

Concerned services must be encouraged to familiarize students with the nature of their service and how help can be obtained. Through such methods as freshman orientation programs, news media, and printed informational material which could be made accessible to students and concerned individuals the value of student services can be greatly enhanced.

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